

VAUDEVILLE IN CHURCH

The Rev. Christian F. Reisner a Believer in Up to Date Methods to Attract People to His Services

PREACHERS have been complaining for years of the difficulty of holding their congregations. More and more they have to contend with diversion from amusement enterprises. Under various pretexts theatres and moving picture shows are held on Sundays as well as week days. A well-known educator said recently: "No scheme of education is possible until it provides for the cheerful and innocent relaxation of the human mind. And the psychological motive has come for the churches of this time to make this matter a part of their recognized mission to the people. Then is the problem which presents itself to preachers. The idea of holding the pulpit is not new. When as Billy Sunday, one time a player, now an evangelist, have taken the States preaching in homes and attracting immense crowds, the novelty of their sensational Sunday is an extremist, but has shown the way, and his success has encouraged others to the possibility of doing the same thing. The latest departure in this appeal to the people was left for a New York pastor, the Rev. Christian F. Reisner, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 14th street. He is a Westchester man who began his work in Denver. His methods are quite unlike Billy Sunday. Dr. Reisner is attempting to bring the phase of the Church which has been in medieval days, the theatre of the community. He does not plan to present miracle or morality plays, but to modernize that idea and is giving his congregation high class vaudeville and moving pictures. That his scheme is successful is testified to by the fact that since his arrival in Grace Church the congregation has increased in two years from 500 to nearly 1,500. It seems strange, at first, to find a church presenting within its walls a class of entertainment that, for many years, has been more or less under the ban. The possibly rubs his eyes when he sees prominently displayed on the church door a large sign which says:

"Moving pictures, 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 7 and 8, 9 and 10, 11 and 12, 13 and 14, 15 and 16, 17 and 18, 19 and 20, 21 and 22, 23 and 24, 25 and 26, 27 and 28, 29 and 30, 31 and 32, 33 and 34, 35 and 36, 37 and 38, 39 and 40, 41 and 42, 43 and 44, 45 and 46, 47 and 48, 49 and 50, 51 and 52, 53 and 54, 55 and 56, 57 and 58, 59 and 60, 61 and 62, 63 and 64, 65 and 66, 67 and 68, 69 and 70, 71 and 72, 73 and 74, 75 and 76, 77 and 78, 79 and 80, 81 and 82, 83 and 84, 85 and 86, 87 and 88, 89 and 90, 91 and 92, 93 and 94, 95 and 96, 97 and 98, 99 and 100, 101 and 102, 103 and 104, 105 and 106, 107 and 108, 109 and 110, 111 and 112, 113 and 114, 115 and 116, 117 and 118, 119 and 120, 121 and 122, 123 and 124, 125 and 126, 127 and 128, 129 and 130, 131 and 132, 133 and 134, 135 and 136, 137 and 138, 139 and 140, 141 and 142, 143 and 144, 145 and 146, 147 and 148, 149 and 150, 151 and 152, 153 and 154, 155 and 156, 157 and 158, 159 and 160, 161 and 162, 163 and 164, 165 and 166, 167 and 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